

## MEDICATIONS:

- Take your medicines, including your over-the-counter medications, as directed by your provider.
- Do not stop or start medicines without asking your provider first.
- If you forget to take your medicine, take it as soon as you remember, if it is within a few hours of the missed dose. If you do not remember until it is almost time for the next dose, just take the next dose as prescribed. Do not double the next dose.
- Order your refills at least 1-2 weeks before you run out.
- Take enough pills with you when you travel, and keep them with you in a carry-on bag.
- If you are taking additional over-the-counter medications or dietary supplements (e.g. vitamins, herbs, health food preparations), please discuss this with your provider

To help you remember, write down the name and strength of all the medicines you take and carry the list with you everywhere you go. Also write down when you take each medicine.

## HEALTHCARE PROVIDER NAME:

## TELEPHONE #:

# HEALTH TIPS FOR HEART FAILURE



Heart Failure is a condition when the heart does not pump as well as expected and is not able to keep up with your body's needs as it should. Heart failure does not



mean that your heart stops working, but it does mean that under certain conditions your heart cannot pump enough blood, food, and oxygen to your body. This may cause you to feel tired or weak. In addition, fluid can build up in your legs and ankles, causing swelling. In some cases, fluid also builds up in your lungs and can cause you to cough or feel short of breath. There are different types of heart failure and different causes. Common causes include high blood pressure, heart attack and, sometime, heavy alcohol use.

Although heart failure is a chronic condition that cannot be cured, it can be treated. Part of a good treatment plan means seeing your health care provider regularly and knowing who and when to call if a problem occurs.

*Call 911 if you have severe chest pain, trouble breathing, or severe dizziness or fainting!*

Version 1.0

Access this document for downloading at  
[http://www.oqo.med.va.gov/cpg/CHF/Health\\_Tips\\_for\\_Heart\\_Failure4.doc](http://www.oqo.med.va.gov/cpg/CHF/Health_Tips_for_Heart_Failure4.doc)



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The following can help you understand what you can do to treat and monitor your condition. Since not every item may apply to you, ask your healthcare provider to go over the list and talk with you about the most important items for you.

### **WEIGHT:**

- Weigh yourself at the same time EVERY day. (Morning is preferred after emptying your bladder.)
- Reduce your weight to no more than 10% greater than your ideal weight.
- In general, if you gain more than 2 pounds overnight or more than 3-5 pounds in one week, call your healthcare provider.

### **DIET:**

- Reduce the amount of salt in your diet. (Be aware of "hidden" salt such as in hot dogs, salami, canned foods, and cheese).
- Check food labels for sodium content. Try to avoid canned or pre-prepared foods that include sodium.
- Total daily sodium should only be around 2 grams (2000 milligrams).
- Do not add salt to your food or when cooking. Ask about using a salt substitute.
- Reduce the amount of fatty foods that you eat, especially whole milk products and fatty meats. Use reduced fat or skim milk and lean meats instead.
- Eat fruits and vegetables.
- Drink fluids only when you are thirsty.

### **EXERCISE:**

- Discuss exercise with your health care team
- Exercise or do some kind of physical activity for at least 30 minutes almost every day.

### **ALCOHOL, SMOKING AND OTHER DRUGS:**

- Avoid alcohol. If you do drink alcohol, drink no more than 1 drink per day.
- Stop smoking.
- Do not use street drugs.

### **OTHER:**

- Get a flu shot every year.
- Get pneumonia vaccination.
- Explain your condition to your family or others so they know how to help you.
- See your healthcare provider regularly. Keep all of your appointments.

### **SYMPTOMS: CALL YOUR PROVIDER IF YOU HAVE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING OR IF SYMPTOMS YOU HAVE BECOME WORSE.**

- Shortness of breath, for example:
  - especially when you are active
  - or if you lay down flat at night
  - or if you need more pillows than usual
  - or if you have to sit up in a chair to breathe easier.
- Persistent frequent cough
- Swelling of your ankles, legs or abdomen
- Dizziness or fainting
- Fatigue or weakness
- Fast or irregular heart beats
- Chest pain or pressure

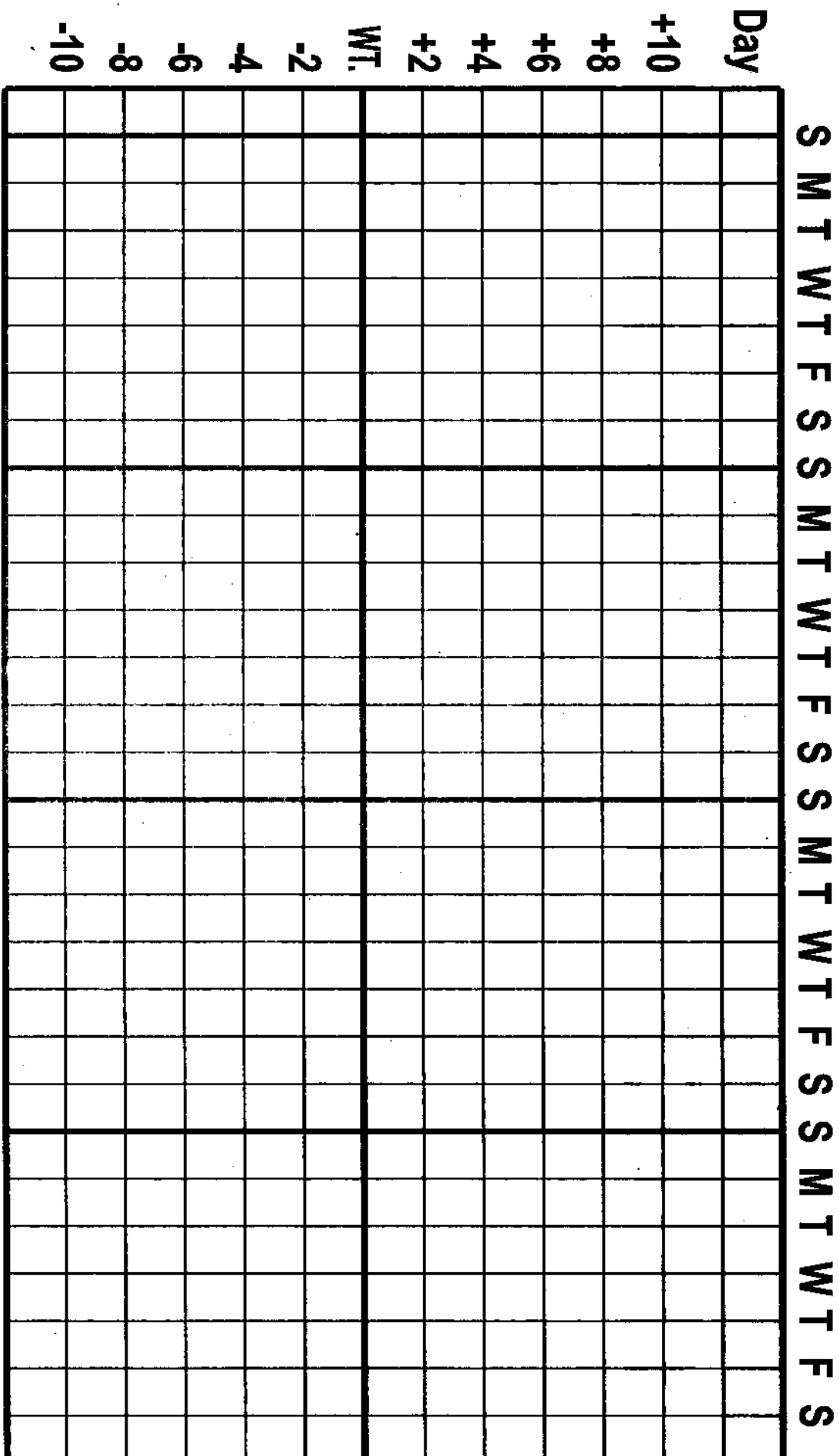
**WEIGHT (WT)**

Chart your weight **daily** on the graph below and show it to your provider at every visit. Weigh yourself at the same time **EVERY** day. (Morning is preferred after emptying your bladder.)

**CALL IF YOUR WEIGHT CHANGES MORE THAN \_\_\_\_\_ POUNDS IN ONE DAY.**

**CALL IF YOUR WEIGHT CHANGES MORE THAN \_\_\_\_\_ POUNDS IN A WEEK.**

**Month** \_\_\_\_\_ **Weight Goal:** \_\_\_\_\_



## MEDICATIONS

*Ask your provider to help you fill out this form and talk about it at each visit. Carry this with you at all times.*

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